Symbols in the Book of Revelation

Use this sheet for reference as you read the Book of Revelation.

Numbers

3—greatness (like seven)

3½—(half of seven) imperfection, a time of trial, persecution

4—the world; the four cardinal points; universality

6—(seven minus one) imperfection and failure

7—plentitude, perfection, fullness, totality

10—a complete number; perfection

12—(three times four) eschatological perfection, tribes of Israel, God’s People

24—(two times twelve) plenitude of God’s People in the Church

42—(number of months in 3½ years) trial, persecution

666—(seven minus one) total imperfection and complete failure

777—(three sevens) absolute perfection and plenitude

1,000—multitude, innumerable quantity

1,260—(days in 3½ years) time of trial, persecution

12,000—limitless numbers; members of the Israelites, the People of God

144,000—(twelve squared and multiplied by one thousand) limitless, complete; symbol of new People of God

Colors

white—victory, glory, joy, purity

red—blood, violence, vengeance

black—death, harm, famine

green—death, pestilence

scarlet—royalty, bloodshed

purple—royal splendor, luxury

blue—transparency, purity
Things

belt on chest—royalty, priesthood
eyes—wisdom, knowledge
full-length robe—priesthood
horns—strength, power
crown—royalty, power, victory
wings—mobility, protection
palm—victory
seals—secret, importance, belonging
star—angel, power, community leader
lampstand—the community, Israel
sword—war, judgment
gold—quality, preciousness, value
trumpet—alarm, message, call to attention, liturgy
precious stones—luxury, wealth, beauty
gaze—judgment
white or gray hair—wisdom, eternity

Places

Babylon—city oppressing the People of God
harlot—Babylon, Rome
New Jerusalem—new Zion, new People of God
sea—evil

Living Creatures

angels—messengers of God, personification of God and natural forces
harlot—Babylon, Rome
horses—military might, invasion, speed
dragon—serpent, Satan
woman—a nation (Jewish, pagan, Church)
lion—bravery, cruelty, king of wild animals
lamb—salvation, simplicity, humility, sacrifice of Jesus, Day of the Lord
bear—cruelty, strength
beast—the Roman Empire, the emperor
white or gray hair—wisdom, eternity
eagle—liberty, far-reaching, queen of birds
bull—fortitude, king of domestic animals